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COVER: A familiar sight among the fall foliage, or in the corn, is this large, handsome iridescent black bird—the grackle—so much larger than starlings, red-wings, cowbirds and other "blackbirds" that he frequently is known as "crow-blackbird." There is more about blackbirds on page 11. Photographer: Karl Maslowski, Cincinnati.

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EDITORIAL

Taxes We Don't Mind Paying

IT is not often that we are moved to say something good about federal taxes, but this is an exception.

Last summer the House Committee on Ways and Means held hearings on the general subject of excise taxes, and undoubtedly the Committee will recommend to the next Congress a revision of the federal excise tax structure.

It is hardly to be expected that manufacturers and principal purchasers of items singled out for special tax levies should stand up and be counted in favor of continuation of these taxes. Yet that is exactly what did happen with respect to the federal excise taxes on sporting arms and ammunition, and on fishing tackle. The reason for this seemingly strange state of affairs is that revenues from these particular excise taxes have not run the familiar course from boondoggle to pork barrel, but have been used effectively for the direct benefit of those who have borne the tax burden.

One of the most significant wildlife conservation enactments of all time was the Federal Aid in Wildlife Restoration Act of 1937, known popularly as the Pittman-Robertson Act after its sponsors, the late Senator Key Pittman of Nevada and Virginia's own then-Congressman and now Senator A. Willis Robertson. Through this Act the 11 per cent manufacturers' tax on sporting arms and ammunition is fairly apportioned among the several states in support of state wildlife research, game restoration, land acquisition and habitat development projects.

The similar Federal Aid in Fish Restoration Program (Dingell-Johnson Act) has, since 1950, apportioned to the states a 10 per cent excise tax on sport fishing tackle to support fishery research, fish restoration and management, and construction and acquisition of public fishing waters.

It is the philosophy of both the P.-R. and D.-J. Acts that those who buy arms, ammunition and tackle should contribute to the perpetuation of hunting and fishing in proportion to the amount they choose to spend to participate in these sports. Fair enough!

Also manifest in these Acts is the philosophy that while a federal tax may insure uniformity and consistency in levying and collecting these sportsmen's contributions, it is not the business of the federal government to move into an area of planning and administration that clearly is state responsibility, and that taxes collected to be used *for such purposes* are *state funds* no matter who the tax collector. This point of view would seem to merit a wider application, but being wildlife men rather than political scientists we will not presume to extend our remarks outside our own field (although we might be tempted to at that if space permitted)!

The federal excise taxes on sporting arms and ammunition and on fishing tackle are good taxes, collected for a good purpose, and properly spent for the direct benefit of those who bear the tax burden. Through the state programs they support, those who pay these taxes now have and will continue to have places to hunt and fish and an annual crop of game and fish to harvest. In any revision of the federal excise tax structure, let us see that the Pittman-Robertson and Dingell-Johnson Programs are not disturbed.

—J. F. Mc.

LETTERS

Disagrees with Editorial

YOUR editorial commenting on the recently published article of Congressman John Dingell of Michigan asking "Why Fight Among Yourselves?" has been read with much interest.

May I respectfully suggest that you read the article again, as I think you completely missed Congressman Dingell's point.

It is true that individuals who class themselves as conservationists have rather limited areas of interest in the broad conservation field, as well as their own individual concepts as to the theories and objectives of proper renewable resource management. In spite of this variety of rugged individualism, which, incidentally, is the trademark of Americans, Congressman Dingell attempted to convey the message that conservationists should be united in their stand on most of the basic conservation issues and problems which are being debated and decided by the elected representatives of the people.

Without concerted and unified expressions on the basic issues of preserving and protecting the environment upon which all living things are dependent, there can be little hope of maintaining the strength of this nation or continuing the highest standard of living, including quality outdoor experiences for the individual.

Congressman Dingell did not in any way intimate that there should not be open discussion and debate, but rather pointed out the constant challenge to resolve differences and unite on these basic issues if any progress is to be made in the conservation field.

Thank you for the opportunity of making these comments.

Thomas L. Kimball
Executive Director
National Wildlife Federation

Likes Editorial

MY brother, Willis G. Jones, has for many years subscribed to VIRGINIA WILDLIFE for me. I read *all* of every issue, and consider it the finest magazine of its type I've ever seen.

I particularly liked your editorial, "Why Fight Among Ourselves?" in the August issue. It is an excellent point you make, not only in connection with conservation, but also in any other worthwhile project.

Melvin R. Jones
New Orleans

Many watershed developments are both proposed and opposed, in the name of resource conservation; hunting for sport is both praised and condemned, by conservationists; wilderness preservation has been branded both resource conservation and resource waste. Such fundamental issues we hope to see debated a long time, unless, of course, in the interests of harmony our own *views are permitted to prevail.—Ed.*

THE BIOLOGY OF HUNTING

By WILLARD T. JOHNS

Commission photos by Kesteloo

FROM the beginning, man has been a hunter. For thousands of years he had to kill wild birds and animals in order to survive. The caveman of prehistoric times spent most of his waking hours in pursuit of game, seeking the only food he knew other than wild fruits, nuts, and berries.

But in many ways mankind has come a long way from his caveman ancestors. Today, the science of animal husbandry and crop production provides us with the food and fiber to sustain modern civilization. Hunting and killing of wild birds and animals is no longer as necessary to our survival as it was even fifty years ago.

A Traditional Sport

Each autumn, however, 25 million Americans—men, women, and youngsters—take to our woods and fields in pursuit of game. Hunting is still a traditional sport in the United States, no longer a necessity for survival, but certainly essential to our well-being. For those who hunt, the spirit of the chase still burns strongly, and the challenge of matching wits against wild creatures still calls when the frost is on the pumpkin and the tang of autumn is in the air.

From a biological standpoint, what effect does hunting have on native populations of game birds and animals? Many sincere citizens are convinced that no game can withstand or survive the annual barrage of high-power rifles, long-range shotguns, Fiberglas bows, and aluminum arrows. To back up their belief, they cite the example of the extinct passenger pigeon which once darkened the skies and was the most numerous bird species in North America. Others remember the Eskimo curlew, the heath hen, great auk or Labrador duck. It is true that all these species, once so plentiful, are gone forever from the face of the earth.

Those who have taken a closer look at the record, however, realize that even though man has exterminated some species and threatens to exterminate others, he seldom, if ever, has done it through hunting.

There is no doubt, of course, that hunting, as it was done by the early settlers, had a considerable effect on wildlife populations. Until early in this century, there were no closed seasons, no bag limits, no restrictions on when, where, and how our forefathers could kill wild birds and animals. But even at that, other factors took their toll of wildlife. At the same time the pioneers were after wild meat for the family table or for the market place, they were also after wild land—land that could be cleared to form farms, land that could be clear-cut to furnish lumber for a growing America, and land that could be covered with cement and steel to build cities, factories, and highways.

Thus it was that the beech forests of eastern America were cut down. As they fell, so did the numbers of passenger pigeons. As man changed the landscape of our country, so too, did he change the numbers and kinds of wildlife that lived here. Unfortunately, some species could not withstand these changes in their natural environment and they simply vanished as the axe, plow, and match moved across the wilderness.

Today, hunting is far different than it was at the turn of the century. The hunter today must abide by the rules and regulations established by his state and federal conservation agencies. These laws are aimed at guaranteeing him a fair and equal chance to pursue his sport; but at the same time, they are designed to protect and perpetuate the wild game he seeks.

In fact, the basic objective of modern game management is the continuous production of wildlife crops in such numbers that a maximum harvest, through hunting or trapping, can be made by man each year. It is based on the premise that wild birds and animals are a crop of the land, even as trees, corn, or cattle are also a crop of the land. Game management is further based on four important principles —biological facts that have been proved through years of scientific research and practical application. Let's take a look at the "Big Four of Game Management."

Reproductive Capacity

One of the most interesting, and startling, facts about game birds and animals is the tremendous reproductive capacity they exhibit. Take typical game birds like the bobwhite quail, ruffed grouse, or ringneck pheasant. One hen will lay an average clutch of 14 eggs. If they all hatch and the young all live and reproduce at the same rate for five years, the total number of offspring resulting from this one bird would be 65,536.

Take a look at another example—an actual case history. South Dakota, world-famous for its pheasant hunting, has never had a game farm. Between 1914 and 1917 the South Dakota Department of Game, Fish, and Parks wild-trapped about 7000 ringnecks in North Dakota and turned them loose around the state. A few other pheasants no doubt trickled down across the border. By the early thirties, South Dakota wildlife biologists figured the population at 16 million birds! They still boast that the state has more pheasants than people.

These are but a few examples of the reproductive capacity inherent in wild bird and animal species. Although the number of young produced annually varies from species to species, the total production of young is amazingly high. Even a bird like the mourning dove, which lays only two eggs, has a production capacity of 8 to 12 young per year because renesting takes place immediately after each pair of young leaves the nest.

The spirit of the chase still burns.

Reprinted with permission from SCIENCE AND CHILDREN, Volume 1, Number 4, (December 1963). Copyright (1963) by the National Science Teachers Association, Washington, D. C. 20036.

The challenge of matching wits still calls.

Carrying Capacity

Obviously, the reproductive capacity of wild birds and animals seldom reaches maximum effectiveness. Nobody has ever seen 65,536 living offspring from a single pair of bobwhite quail and nobody ever will. Each acre of land, each farm, each county, or each state has a limit to the number of wild birds or animals it can support over a long period of time. This maximum number is called "carrying capacity." Even though a farm woodlot might contain 14 mourning doves in September (the adult pair and 12 young), it most certainly will not contain that number in February. The carrying capacity of this particular woodlot fluctuates with the seasons, weather, food supply, and many other factors. To a wildlife manager, these factors are known as "limiting factors." Disease, predators, food, cover, weather, hunting—all these are limiting factors in the total number of birds or animals any given area can support. These factors, singly and in combination, determine the carrying capacity which can always be reached but never exceeded.

Population Turnover

If you have 100 animals in a certain area in the fall, how many of them will be alive a year from now? On the average about 70 of these animals—rabbits, squirrels, pheasants, quail, grouse, or anything else—are going to be eliminated in the next year. This is "population turnover." Stated simply, it means that in any wildlife population natural mortality is very heavy. Some of these wild birds or animals will be caught by predators. Some will become sick and die while others will be caught in a heavy summer storm and be lost. Some will be taken by hunters in the fall; more will succumb in winter's cold and snow. The important point to remember is that this natural mortality—this population turnover is remarkably consistent, even when there is no hunting. The mourning dove, for example, is legal game in 28 states. Literally millions are shot by hunters each year. But studies in other states where no hunting is allowed have shown that mourning dove populations in these areas are no higher, and in most cases are even lower than in the states where hunting is allowed.

Harvestable Surplus

The surplus birds and animals produced each year are the ones which the game manager tries to make available to the hunter. These creatures are doomed to die anyway, and the basic objective of sound wildlife management is to permit this surplus to be used for the benefit of man. In fact, an adequate harvest of surplus animals in the fall helps to prevent overcrowding of the winter range and can eliminate winter starvation. The Pennsylvania deer herd is a classic example. Back in the thirties when there were an estimated million animals in the herd, inadequate harvest because of adverse public opinion resulted in too many animals on the range as winter set in. The result—thousands of deer died from starvation by spring, most of them fawns or the smaller, younger animals. By harvesting more deer in recent years, and bringing the population more nearly in balance with its available natural food supply, a more properly nourished, vigorous population of whitetails has resulted. It is a population that is also capable of higher rates of reproduction (twin or triplet fawns instead of singles) and consequently should give better harvests for the hunter in the future.

These are the big four principles in modern game management. Hunting game birds and animals has never been the entire cause for extinction of certain species. Under the watchful eye of state and federal conservation agencies, there is no danger that any wildlife species on this continent will be shot to death. The wildlife conservation lesson in these four basic cornerstones of game management is plain. We cannot produce wildlife—only nature can do that. But we can help nature by understanding her ways and abiding by her laws. We can increase wildlife populations only by helping nature increase the carrying capacity by restoring soil fertility and by wise farm and forest management. Through these means, and these alone, we can provide more and better food, shelter, and water for wildlife. Nature, through her amazing power of reproduction, will stock the new wildlife homes as fast as we can provide them.

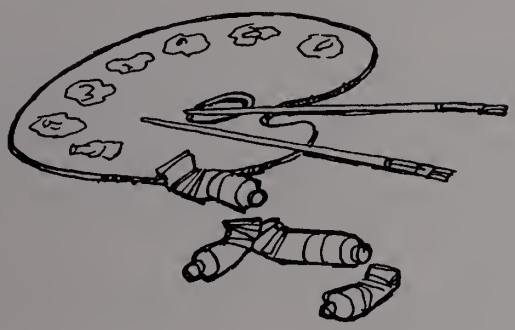
Teddy Roosevelt, who had a large part in starting the conservation movement in America, put it this way: "In hunting, the finding, and killing game is after all but a part of the whole. The free, self-reliant, adventurous life, with its rugged and stalwart democracy; the wild surroundings, the grand beauty of the scenery, the chance to study the ways and habits of woodland creatures—all these unite to give to the career of the wilderness hunter its peculiar charm."

Because of the tremendous reproductive capacity of game species, hunting is biologically sound in good habitat.

Outdoor Scenes

FROM ORIGINALS by
HERB JONES

A life-long native of Norfolk, artist Herb Jones describes himself as an avid conservationist who is saddened by the disappearance of many picturesque wildlife scenes from his area, and who feels compelled to record a passing way of life. He has graciously given us permission to share these recorded scenes with readers of VIRGINIA WILDLIFE, even though we are unable to reproduce them in the glorious colors in which the originals are done. Next month's cover, however, will carry in full color a wildlife scene done by Mr. Jones a few months ago especially for this magazine.



Landscape for Birds And Beauty

Karl Maslowski photo

By ILEEN BROWN
South Boston

AN attractive lawn and one that is attractive to birds is as compatible as bread and butter. Trees and shrubs that provide welcome food for birds also add much needed color to the winter landscape.

There are no statistics to prove which is the most important, cover or food, to the welfare of birds. Without cover birds will not remain in an area, and without food they will die. If we provide both, along with nesting areas, we are sure to keep birds in our yards.

Each yard should have some evergreens for winter protection against rain and snow. The space in individual yards will have much to do with the number and size of trees and shrubs that are chosen. Most yards will have enough space to accommodate several cedars or pines; these provide year-round cover and food.

Red cedar is one of the most popular large evergreen trees. The small blueberries of this attractive tree are tasty morsels to many birds. The two cedars that mark the property line at the back of our lot are seldom without birds among their dark green branches. The birds also use these trees as watch towers to spot me carrying food to the feeders.

White pine, another large evergreen tree with soft blue-green needles and large brown seed cones, also provides year-round cover and food. It is also used by robins and blue jays for nesting.

For the smaller yards that cannot accommodate cedars and pines there is American holly. The handsome green foliage and brilliant red berries make it a beautiful shrub for any yard. If left to grow naturally it will reach a height of 20 feet. The branches are thickly spaced, therefore provide ideal cover. It holds its berries into the winter months. Our American hollies are visited by mockingbirds, sparrows and wrens.

Russian olive is another bird treat. This small shrub type tree has silvery foliage and small yellow, fragrant flowers in early summer. The blooms are followed by an abundance of silvery white bean-size fruit. Mockingbirds, cedar waxwings, thrashers, robins and bluebirds are among the more than 50 different kinds of birds that enjoy this fruit.

Usually the birds will swallow the fruit whole, with the exception of smaller birds; they pick the pulp from the seed. The fruit remains on the tree throughout the winter. While Russian olive discards its leaves in the winter, the thick spreading branches make it particularly welcome for winter cover. It is also used by mourning doves and mockingbirds for nesting.

(Continued on page 20)

THE POSITIVE SIDE OF LAW ENFORCEMENT

By LEWIS BRANDT
Game Warden, Albemarle County

Adapted from a talk given at the November 11, 1963, meeting of the Albemarle Chapter, Izaak Walton League of America.

ANY organization that is worth its salt must have a goal toward which it strives. I believe the Game Commission has a goal which is a high and holy cause. We work together to develop the potentials of the state of Virginia and its wildlife resources, and we certainly have a great potential. We have an abundant water system in the state to attract migratory waterfowl. In our flatlands we have abundant cover and food that provide habitat for quail, rabbit, squirrel and deer. As we go on into our rolling hills and highlands we find abundant cover for grouse, more deer cover, and there's always room for bear. The pheasants that have been introduced now are taking hold, and we look forward to the years to come when there will be good pheasant hunting in Virginia.

The Game Commission, through all of its divisions, seeks to serve the public. We work hand in hand with the sportsman to make Virginia a place that sportsmen from all over the country will want to come to, to hunt and to fish. And, being a game warden, I believe that the Law Enforcement Division of the Game Commission has a great deal to contribute toward achieving this goal. But it can never achieve a great deal unless we have one important thing on our side, and that is the cooperation of the public. We need a favorable public opinion, if we are ever going to joins hands with the sportsman in a tight clasp, so that we *can* make Virginia a great place to hunt and fish.

We have a common cause with the sportsmen of Virginia. We need their wholehearted cooperation if we are to protect their interests.
Commission photo by Kesteloo

When you begin to talk about law enforcement and prosecution of individuals, it seems to leave a bitter taste in the mouths of sportsmen. But if we stop for a moment to examine the nature of the law, perhaps we can develop a more favorable attitude toward it.

Law was never meant to be something negative. It is a positive thing. It was never meant to prevent, but rather to provide. I think of one of the songs of our nation, "America the Beautiful." In one of its stanzas it says "confirm our soul in self-control, and our liberty in law." Law was made to provide liberty and freedom, and that is as true with game laws as with any others.

In our Code we have numerous laws that are designed to serve the public, to give them freedom and liberty in the field. Our job is to protect the rights of the sportsman who pays his $3.50 for a license, his dollar for a big game license, and other fees. We are there to provide protection for his right. We believe that the game laws are to provide protection for the rights of the individual who waits until the third Monday in November, or other appointed date, to begin his hunting season. We believe we protect the rights of the individual who, in going to the fields and streams, abides by the bag and creel limits.

Sometimes, in the protection of the rights of people, it is necessary to prosecute. We never feel that prosecution is an end in itself, but that it serves this purpose of protection. We prosecute an individual not so much because he has violated a written code, as because he has transgressed the rights of other sportsmen who have waited and followed the law. This is our purpose, and if all people, law enforcement officers and sportsmen alike, would join in this understanding of the law, we could have a greater cooperation. Cooperation between sportsmen and law enforcement officers has taken great strides in past years, and it can grow even faster if we look at the law as a positive thing, rather than as something negative.

Let us consider a few of the laws that it will be important for us to respect during the coming hunting season. One of them pertains to "Posted" signs. No one dislikes to see a "Posted" sign any more than I do. I know that there are a lot of good wooded areas, a lot of good fields and streams, that are not available to the sportsman because of "Posted" signs. There are probably three reasons why "Posted" signs will be found. First, because sportsmen at some time have abused the privilege of hunting on a man's land. They may have gone on the property without receiving the permission of the landowner. Fences have been torn down; cattle shot; and certainly we cannot blame the landowner for putting up a "Posted" sign when such conditions have prevailed. And then land is posted, I believe, because there are people who don't want to see wildlife shot. We believe that this is not exactly in harmony with sound

(Continued on next page)

Law Enforcement (Continued from page 9)

principles of management. But some people don't like to see animals killed. I know of a family who have a coon, not one kept in captivity, but one from the wilds that will come to the back porch to be fed by hand. These would not want to see this animal shot, or chased by dogs. We don't always agree, but at least we can respect people who have this feeling. And then sometimes land may be posted out of sheer orneriness. Some people seem to want to keep a "Posted" sign up just to prevent other people from hunting. But whatever the cause, we should respect and protect the right of the landowner to post his land, and abide by his wishes in that matter, while seeking to gain a better relationship with him and to gain his confidence so that one day the signs will come down. When "Posted" signs are violated, it only means that they will be up there longer.

And then, in consideration of another law, with the coming of the deer season, we should remember to put the tag on the deer as soon as it falls dead. The deer is shot. You go up to him and you are sure that he is dead. The very next thing you must do is to place the big game tag on the deer. I think we can all understand the reason for this. I remember working a deer season in Bath County. The warden and I were going down this back road, and we came round a curve and here was a car. A man was just in the process of closing the trunk lid. We stepped out of our car and caught a glimpse of a deer in the trunk. There were a few items placed over the deer, but it was still partially visible. On a routine investigation of it we found the deer had not been tagged, and the men said they were now going to the game checking station to have the deer checked. Well, there is a statement in the Bible, in the Book of Samuel, that says that "Man looketh on the outer things and God looketh on the heart." There's no way in the world that a game warden, who is a mere man, can judge the intentions within the heart of an individual. The warden will always have to size up the situation from the outer facts. We couldn't tell from the outward appearance of the situation whether the deer was heading for the checking station or the deep freeze. So a summons had to be issued. The best way to show the intentions of the heart in a matter like this is to abide by the rules. Place the tag on the deer.

Then there is the matter of dogs. In a deer hunt, when you place your dogs out on land that is available for hunting, and the dogs follow the deer and chase him on across posted land, remember you have the right to go get your dogs, but not the right to bring the deer off the posted land, or to kill him there, or to carry weapons on the posted land without permission. In the case of a fox hunt, if the fox takes the dogs across posted land you have the right to follow your dogs there. But if they are in process of a deer hunt, and they cross the land, go get the dogs. Leave your firearms behind.

Two other laws I'll mention quickly. Remember that a shotgun must be plugged. The law does not state that you must have only three shells in your gun, but it states that your gun must not be capable of handling more than three. I remember a case where a gentleman had only three shells in his gun, and was rather angry when he found that his gun would hold four. The law is in reference to the weapon, and not to the number of shells in it at the time. And, finally, let's everybody have a license before he hunts. I hope all of us together will have a good season afield.

Not to deny your rights or restrict your pleasure afield . . .

. . . but rather to protect and provide them.

Commission photos by Harrison

Too Many Blackbirds?

ARE there too many blackbirds? Many farmers who have seen these birds feeding on agricultural crops will answer "yes!" Naturalists are equally likely to answer "no." Most biologists agree that not enough is known about blackbirds to overwhelmingly praise or condemn their relationship to man and agriculture.

The common Virginia blackbirds under question are starlings, grackles, red-winged blackbirds, and cowbirds. All experts agree that these birds have a "Jekyll and Hyde" personality. For most of the year they feed on weed seeds and insects that are usually agricultural pests. In this way they perform a service for the farmer that has yet to be satisfactorily measured.

The "Hyde character" becomes evident when grackles pull sprouting corn, starlings destroy fruit crops, and when they attack grains in the milk-stage. The actual damage caused by blackbirds has not been adequately measured either. The few studies reported indicate that only rarely will more than 5 percent of the crop be lost.

Blame Misplaced

Because the natural foods of blackbirds are most easily found in cultivated fields, farmers may be misled into believing the birds are eating his crops when actually they may be feeding on weed seeds and insects that are crop pests. In eastern Virginia, blackbirds are blamed for destroying field sorghum. A biologist studying the problem showed that a fungus disease, anthracnose, was causing most of the losses. In another Virginia field, the blackbirds thought to be eating corn were actually feeding on the corn earworm. When the farmer controlled the earworm with an insecticide, the blackbirds left the field.

There is no doubt, however, that blackbirds can and are a serious problem under some circumstances. The National Audubon Society has agreed that local destruction of blackbirds may be necessary at the site of the damage. Certain farm groups meet considerable opposition when they recommend that entire roosts containing millions of blackbirds be destroyed by toxic chemicals. Not enough is known about the damage done by blackbirds or their beneficial effects to warrant such drastic action.

Devices Available

Various frightening devices are available which, when employed properly, reduce the damage by more than half. These devices are, however, costly and require constant servicing. Furthermore, all they actually do is frighten birds to other feeding areas, perhaps on the neighboring farm.

More satisfactory results may be obtained by diverting fields where blackbirds are a problem to other kinds of crops. A variety of hybrid corn has been developed in Ohio with husks so tough that blackbirds cannot open the ear. Combine Sagrain is a blackbird resistant variety of milo being tested in Virginia. Marginal grain fields near blackbird roosts might better be planted to alfalfa or pasture.

Changes in farming methods also help. The field drying of peanuts in windows sets a perfect table for hungry birds and losses are sometimes high. The modern field combining and artificial drying of the peanut crop has practically eliminated bird damage.

All blackbirds, except the imported European starling, are currently under the full protection of migratory bird laws. Anyone who destroys these birds without getting the necessary permits is subject to prosecution. A state permit is available from the Virginia Commission of Game and Inland Fisheries and a federal permit from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

The Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife is currently conducting an extensive research program on the biology and bioeconomics of blackbirds. Better methods of control and reduction of damage are being sought. Biologists largely agree that more facts are needed before the mass destruction of blackbirds is warranted.

From Virginia Polytechnic Institute *Extension Service News*, February, 1964.

Photo by Leonard Lee Rue III

AVITROL METHOD OF CONTROL SHOWS PROMISE

PHILLIPS Petroleum Company, long interested in wildlife conservation, has discovered a new principle that promises relief for farmers fighting a losing battle with local concentrations of nuisance birds, according to National Wildlife Federation's *Conservation News*. The "Avitrol" method of bird control involves feeding small amounts of effective chemicals in suitable baits. Birds that consume the treated bait utter distress calls and react in a manner that causes unaffected birds to leave the area.

The two most effective chemicals found thus far by Phillips research scientists are trademarked Avitrol 100 and Avitrol 200. Both are registered under terms of the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide and Rodenticide Act. The chemicals are toxic to birds when ingested in sufficient amounts, but by adjusting concentrations in the bait and limiting the amount of bait available, most mortality can be avoided under normal conditions of use.

Successful field tests of the new chemical controls have been carried out on sparrows at airports in Oklahoma, pigeons in Tulsa and Oklahoma City, starlings on an Illinois farm, and blackbirds in several rice fields in Texas.

GUNMANSHIP

By JOHN MADSON and ED KOZICKY
Conservation Department
Olin Mathieson Chemical Corporation

Commission photo by Kesteloo

A REAL rifleman lived in our town. We boys held him in great awe, for he had shot in the national rifle matches at Camp Perry and knew more about guns than any other man in our small world.

One day a boy showed him a birthday .22. The man took the little rifle, carefully opened the action, and inspected the chamber to see that it was empty. He then sighted the rifle and pronounced it "a beaut."

The boy asked: "How come you opened the bolt? My gun ain't loaded."

The old rifleman replied: "In the first place, it ain't a gun. It's a rifle. And I figgered it wasn't loaded, but didn't know *for sure*. And because you handed me the rifle with the action closed, *neither did you!*"

Since then we've watched many such men, and their gunmanship. When they handed a gun to another man, the gun's action was open. It is one old gunner's courtesy to another—and the unwritten law of never taking anyone's word that a gun is unloaded. Our point is simply this: the *real* shooter never takes chances. He never relaxes his vigilance when he handles firearms. Thus it must be with boys.

Boys and guns go together. But when a boy becomes a shooter, he must put childish horseplay behind him. When the young shooter is entrusted with a gun, it means that someone believes he is old enough to use it safely and well. His gun is a man-sized responsibility. He should use it as often as possible—for shooting skill is honed with practice—but always remembering that a gun is a man's tool and not a boy's toy. A good gun, used with proper ammunition, is no more dangerous than an axe or saw. It is only a tool. It is the person handling the gun who makes it dangerous or safe.

Never miss a chance to go afield with experienced shooters. But beware going afield with guns and other youngsters. Sure, your buddies are interested in shooting. But it's not your job to teach them. Unless you have capable adult supervision, don't go shooting with kids who have little or no gun training. We know many gray-haired hunters who pick their field companions on the basis of safe gun-handling and not just friendship alone—which is one reason they've lived long enough to have gray hair.

You must always be watchful when dealing with guns and gunning, but there are certain times when you must be doubly alert:

1. When you've had just enough experience to think you know all the answers, and grow careless. You may know the answers, but have your subconscious mind and reflexes been thoroughly trained in safe gun-handling?

(Continued on page 22)

CONSERVATIONGRAM

Commission Activities and Late Wildlife News . . . At A Glance

CHESAPEAKE LAND IN SURRY COUNTY CLOSED TO HUNTING. The 3,000 acre Chesapeake Corporation tract in Surry County will be closed to public hunting during the 1964-65 season, according to R. H. Cross, Game Division Chief of the Commission of Game and Inland Fisheries. Extensive logging operations being carried out by the company on the area make hunting impractical and dangerous.

The wooded acreage had been cooperatively managed by the Game Commission and the Chesapeake Corporation as a public hunting area for a number of years. Hunters had only been required to purchase a $2.00 permit to hunt on Chesapeake Corporation land.

BIG TUMBLING CREEK TO REMAIN OPEN AFTER FEE FISHING ENDS. Because of continued fisherman interest, the closing date for the Game Commission's Big Tumbling Creek fee fishing facility on the Clinch Mountain Wildlife Management Area was extended through October 4, after which date the stream will remain open with no fee through the remainder of the trout season under regular state-wide trout regulations. After the end of the fee fishing season, fishermen will need trout licenses in addition to the appropriate general fishing license. Three-day licenses will not be honored for trout fishing after the fee fishing season has closed. No additional stocking is planned after October 4, when the daily fee requirement is waived.

The campground will remain open for the benefit of fishermen and hunters this fall. A $1.50 daily charge is made for the use of these facilities.

To date a total of 43,800 trout have been stocked for the 14,545 fishermen who purchased the $1.00 daily fishing permit. Anglers have accounted for 36,511 of the stocked trout for an average catch of slightly over two and a half trout per trip. The Commission is highly pleased with the usage received at Clinch Mountain this year and plans to expand the program to other areas of the state as soon as facilities can be developed.

REDHEADS AND CANS ALLOWED IN WATERFOWL BAG. After a four year prohibition, hunters in the Old Dominion will again be allowed limited redhead and canvasback shooting during the 1964-65 waterfowl season adopted by the Virginia Commission of Game and Inland Fisheries. Hunters will be allowed to take 3 ducks daily, including not more than 2 canvasbacks or 2 redheads or one of each, 2 wood ducks, or 2 mallards, during the 50 day November 14 through January 2 season. After opening day, hunters may have in possession from two or more days' shooting not more than 6 ducks including no more than 2 canvasbacks or 2 redheads or one of each, 2 wood ducks, or 4 mallards. Duck hunters will be allowed to begin shooting at sunrise on opening day this year instead of observing the noon opening of the past several seasons.

In addition to the bag limits on other ducks, hunters may bag 5 mergansers daily including not more than 1 hooded merganser. Until this year the hooded merganser was included in the regular duck bag limit. The possession limit on these species is 10, of which no more than 2 may be hooded mergansers. Waterfowl gunners may also bag 10 coots daily and have 20 in possession after opening day.

Goose hunters will get a break this fall with a daily bag of 3 Canadas and a possession limit of 6 during a 70-day goose season extending from November 7 to January 15. Brant hunting will be permitted during the same period with a daily bag and possession limit of 6.

A coon with a bear's appetite and nothing but empty cans.

RING-TAILED

Ah, rabbit on the menu tonight. Unlucky cottontail—lucky coon. Those automobiles are good for something, but not much.

Let's skip the soup course and start with the fish.

Corn on the cob.

RASCAL RAMBLES

Photos by Leonard Lee Rue III

Now, what is all the commotion about down there?

I know you are in there.

Oh, oh! Who turned on that light?

Dessert.

"Tulip Poplar"

Photo by the author

The Tuliptree

By A. B. MASSEY
V.P.I. Forestry and Wildlife

THE tuliptree is known by various names. The flowers resemble the garden tulip. The light rather soft wood is suggestive of the poplar. Lumbermen call it yellow poplar or simply poplar. It is not related to the poplar or cottonwood but a species of the magnolia family. Technically it is known as *Liriodendron tulipifera*. The first name, which is that of the genus, is a Greek word meaning lily wood on account of the resemblance of the flower to that of the garden tulip, which is of the lily family.

In the deciduous forest of Virginia the tall columnar trunk with gray furrowed bark of the tuliptree is very distinctive. As to height and girth the sycamore is a competitor, but in Virginia the tuliptree attains the greatest height of the deciduous trees. In 1835 the Farmer's Register relates that there was standing in Dinwiddie County, near the Amelia County line, a tuliptree in flourishing condition, 34 feet 6 inches in circumference 6 feet above the ground and 43 feet 8 inches at the 3 foot level, and 90 feet to the first limb. "It stands in solitary grandeur," relates the Register, and so it must have. A tree in Rockbridge County, recently measured, was found to be 22 feet 8 inches in circumference 4 feet above the ground.

Attractive tuliptrees stood in some of the home grounds of early Virginia. In the Carter home near Williamsburg, Nomini Hall, which stood in Westmoreland County, and Thomas Jefferson's place near Forest, Virginia, known as Poplar Hill, all have one or more tuliptrees. There are communities in the State such as Poplar Spring, Poplar Cove and others, the names of which are probably associated with the tuliptree.

Tuliptrees which grow in the open do not have the columnar trunk as do those crowded by other trees; large lower limbs develop. The tree is sensitive to shade; hence. when shaded the lower limbs are suppressed and only the upper limbs develop.

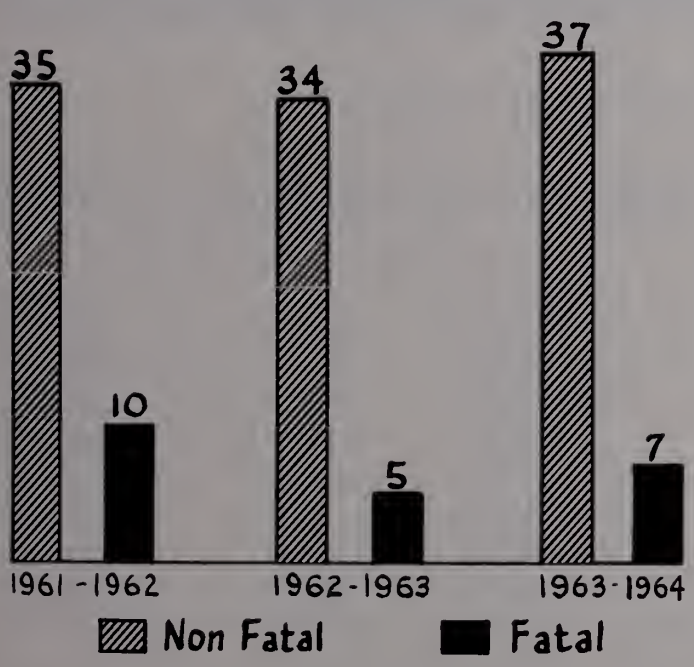
The tuliptree thrives in light fertile soil of mountain coves and valleys. Eastward it occurs in moist, well drained soil. It ranges widely from New England to Florida and westward to Michigan and Louisiana. There is only one species in America. A Chinese species (*Liriodendron chinese*) is similar to ours. The flowers are smaller and greenish without yellow markings. The leaves are more deeply lobed. The leaf of our species is very distinctive. It is smooth, 3 to 5 inches broad, with 1 or 2 pointed lobes on each side and two at the upper end which are separated by a broad shallow notch. A one seeded fruit develops from each of the numerous pistils of the flower. Later these are seen on the tree in a cone-like cluster. Each fruit has a narrow wing-like appendage by means of which the one seeded fruits are wind-borne away from the parent tree. These are eaten by squirrels and some birds, especially the cardinal and purple finch. Some of the fruit clusters remain on the tree into the winter and are available as winter food. The twigs of the tuliptree are dark brownish-red and have a characteristic odor when bruised. The terminal bud is somewhat flat and rounded on the end. Some have likened it to a duck's bill. A distinct line encircles the twig at each joint where a leaf is attached.

In the fall the leaves become bright yellow. The wood is soft and lightweight. The sapwood is white or lightly colored while the heartwood is yellowish brown. The wood is extensively used for boxes, baskets, woodenware, excelsior, interior and cabinet work where a polished wood is not desired or is to be painted.

The tree is not seriously affected by diseases and insects; however, the leaves may become brown spotted due to the action of a gall insect.

This Year Let's Go All Out for Hunting Safety!

By J. N. KERRICK
Safety Officer



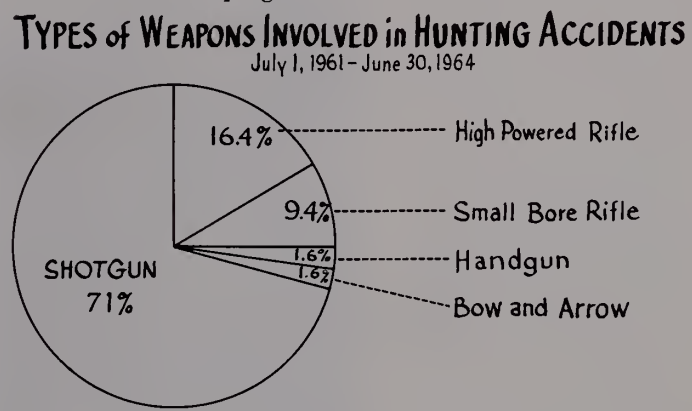
Over this three-year period in Virginia, an average of seven hunters a year have been critically wounded and an average of thirty-five have been injured in hunting accidents involving firearms.

IN 1961 the Commission of Game and Inland Fisheries and the National Rifle Association of America entered into a cooperative agreement to promote hunter safety within the state of Virginia. As a result, on June 30, 1964, Virginia had 1287 approved hunter safety instructors, and 13,039 students graduated from the hunter safety course. Where the hunter safety program has been concentrated, firearm accidents while hunting have been curtailed.

Between July 1, 1961, and June 30, 1964, there were 128 firearm hunting accidents reported to the Virginia Commission of Game and Inland Fisheries. Twenty two, or 17.2 percent, of these accidents resulted in the death of the victim.

No safety program will completely erase any type of accident, but a continuous educational program in the safe handling of firearms will definitely reduce hunting accidents.

Game Commission personnel, sportsman's clubs, civic organizations and many sports-minded individuals have contributed hundreds of hours to educate Virginia's youth in the safe handling of firearms, but even more instructors are needed if every young hunter in Virginia is to be reached with the program.



Shotguns are involved in almost three-quarters of Virginia's hunting accidents. Undoubtedly, they are the most dangerous weapons at the close ranges at which most accidents occur, but their high rate of involvement in accidents probably reflects their widespread use in comparison with other firearms as much as any really significant differences in relative safety!

Our youth were involved in approximately 50 percent of the firearm accidents while hunting. Such things as careless gun handling, wrong identification of targets, and using a gun as a club are but a few of the accident causes.

One cannot expect a young nimrod to hunt safely if he has not been taught what to do and what not to do. The hunter safety program covers proper gun handling, target identification, hunter-landowner relations, game conservation, and sportsmanship.

Experience gained through the hunter safety course will help to make better as well as safer citizens for tomorrow. This program is worthy of the personal interest and support of every hunter and target shooter. The program means greater safety for all, more fun, and a chance to guide youngsters and new shooters of all ages along the right path from the beginning.

Sportsman's clubs or individuals who would like to encourage hunting safety are requested to contact the Safety Officer, Education Division, Virginia Commission of Game and Inland Fisheries, Richmond, for guidance and material needed to present a hunter safety course.

Our motto: "Educate the Young and Remind the Old."

(Continued next page)

Hunting Casualties By Distance

July 1, 1961 – June 30, 1964

Distance from Muzzle to Victim	Number	Per Cent
0-10 YARDS	65	50.8
10-50 YARDS	33	25.8
50-100 YARDS	16	12.5
100 or more YARDS	3	2.3
UNKNOWN	11	8.6
TOTAL	128	100.

Over 50 percent of the 128 hunting casualties reported in Virginia during the past three years were standing less than 10 yards from the muzzle of the gun.

Hunter Casualties By Age Of Shooter

July 1, 1961 — June 30, 1964

19 years or under	61	47.7%
20 to 29	18	14.0%
30 to 39	12	9.4%
40 to 49	10	7.8%
50 to 59	10	7.8%
60 or over	6	4.7%
UNKNOWN	11	8.6%
TOTAL	128	100%

Shooters under 19 years of age account for about as many casualties as all other age groups combined.

Hunting Casualties by Animals Hunted

July 1, 1961 - June 30, 1964

DEER	43	33.6%
RABBIT	22	17.1%
SQUIRREL	20	15.6%
QUAIL	10	7.8%
TURKEY	5	3.9%
DOVES	3	2.3%
DUCK	2	1.6%
COON	2	1.6%
BEAR	1	.8%
GROUSE	1	.8%
WOODCHUCK	8	6.3%
OTHER NON GAME SPECIES	8	6.3%
UNKNOWN	3	2.3%
TOTAL	128	100%

Deer hunting, which often involves large concentrations of hunters, appears to be the most dangerous.

Hunter Casualties By Age of Victim

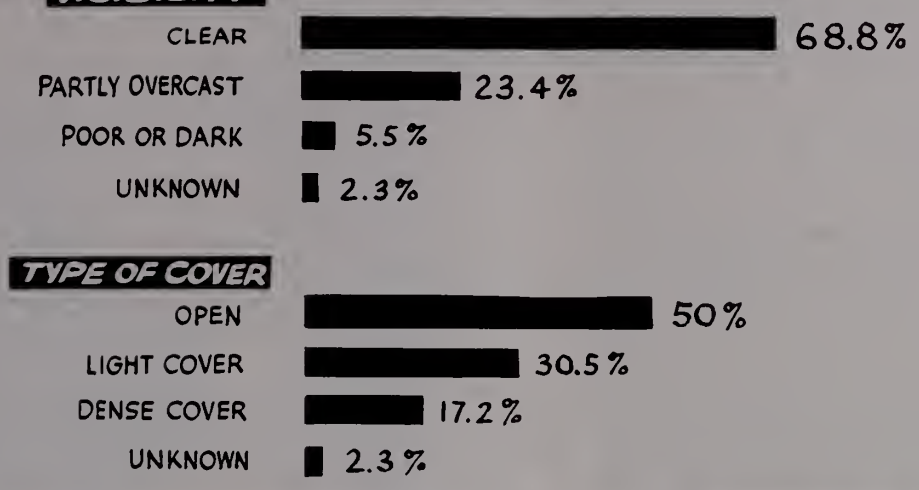
July 1, 1961 — June 30, 1964

19 or under	29	35.4%
20 to 29	16	19.5%
30 to 39	16	19.5%
40 to 49	11	13.4%
50 to 59	3	3.7%
60 or over	7	8.5%
UNKNOWN		
TOTAL	82	100%

In addition to being involved as shooters in about half of all hunting accidents, the youngest age group also furnished the most victims.

Hunting Casualties By Visibility and Type of Cover

July 1, 1961 - June 30, 1964



Most hunting accidents took place when visibility was good and in cover which was either light or open, conditions under which accidents positively can be prevented by safe gun handling and proper shooting precautions.

The Virginia Game Commission, in cooperation with the National Rifle Association, has trained over 1200 certified hunting safety instructors to help "educate the young and remind the old."

The Time Of Day Casualties Occurred

July 1, 1961 – June 30, 1964

Forty percent occurred in the A.M. hours, 58.5% occurred in the P.M. hours, 1.5% are unknown. Accidents occur with greatest frequency from 11 A.M. to 1 P.M. and between 4 P.M. and 5 P.M.

1: A.M.	0	1: P.M.	12
2: A.M.	0	2: P.M.	9
3: A.M.	0	3: P.M.	9
4: A.M.	0	4: P.M.	26
5: A.M.	0	5: P.M.	11
6: A.M.	0	6: P.M.	3
7: A.M.	8	7: P.M.	1
8: A.M.	6	8: P.M.	3
9: A.M.	5	9: P.M.	1
10: A.M.	8	10: P.M.	0
11: A.M.	12	11: P.M.	0
12: NOON	12	12: Midnight	0

UNKNOWN 2

Landscape (Continued from page 8)

Privet is another evergreen that we have found the birds enjoy. Some bird experts do not list this as being attractive to birds, but from personal experience I am including it here. We have a privet at the corner of our bedroom window and near the feeding station. We let the privet grow without pruning. It is now over 20 feet tall and thickly branched. Wrens, sparrows, mockingbirds and cardinals are particularly fond of the blue-black berries. The birds also perch in this tree between visits to the feeder. I think the prettiest sight I have seen in a long time was during our last snow. The privet branches were piled with feathery snow and perched within the many branches, like so many sparkling jewels, were cardinals, blue jays, wrens, sparrows and mockingbirds.

Autumn olive, a lilac-size shrub, is a good source of winter food for many songbirds. This shrub with silver green foliage and red berries is an ideal accent shrub for the yard. The birds begin to enjoy the berries in September and on into the winter. It is also ideal for nesting.

Crabapple is another bird delicacy. When we purchased our crabapple tree some 15 years ago, we were interested only in an ornamental tree for the yard, so we ordered for beauty and not fruit. Whether I erred in ordering or the nursery in filling the order, our flowering crab not only was beautiful but had normal apple-size fruit. The fruit is hard and with a twang, but delicious to us and to catbirds, blue jays and mockingbirds.

The flowering dogwood is a favorite of more than a hundred birds. This dwarf tree that turns the countryside into a wonderland of white mist in early spring, holds its red berries well into the winter. Dogwoods from the woods do not transplant easily; therefore, it is best to buy from a nursery.

The following list of shrubs and trees is by no means a complete list. There are many more just as beautiful and just as welcome to birds for lifesaving food and cover.

Trees and Shrubs for Winter Food and Cover

RED CEDAR (*Juniperus virginiana*)—Grows to height of 90 feet. Provides year-round food, cover and nesting. It is susceptible to rust. Should not be planted near apple trees.

AUSTRIAN PINE (*Pinus nigra*)—Rather slow grower. Compact, dark green foliage, long needles. Year-round food, cover and nesting.

WHITE PINE (*Pinus strobus*)—Attractive cone bearing evergreen. Fast grower. Grows to 100 feet. Year-round cover, food and nesting.

ARBORVITAE (*Thuja occidentalis*)—Pyramidal evergreen shrub; 12-14 feet. Compact with lacy green foliage.

AMERICAN HOLLY (*Ilex opaca*)—Small evergreen tree; 25 feet at maturity. White blooms in early spring, followed by red berries that remain throughout winter. Good cover.

MOUNTAINASH (*Sorbus aucuparia*)—Ornamental deciduous tree. Dense foliage turns golden-red in fall. Cluster of red berries. Grows 20-25 feet.

SARGENT CRABAPPLE (*Malus sargenti*)—Small shrub type tree grows to 8 feet.

WASHINGTON HAWTHORN (*Crataegus*)—Dark green shiny leaves. Clusters of white flowers in early spring followed by red berries. Broad tree, 20-30 feet tall.

BITTERSWEET (*Celastrus scandens*)—Handsome vine with glossy foliage, large clusters of orange-crimson fruit.

WINTERBERRY (*Ilex verticillata*)—Grows 6-8 feet. Deciduous holly. Bright red berries.

VIBURNUM (*Viburnum rhytidophyllum*)—Hardy broad-leaved evergreen. Grows to 6-8 feet. White flowers in May followed by red berries.

RUSSIAN OLIVE (*Elaeagnus angustifolia*)—Hardy, small deciduous tree. 12-20 feet. Wide spreading branches. Silvery grey foliage; small yellow, fragrant blooms in early summer. White, bean-size fruit. Good cover.

AUTUMN OLIVE (*Elaeagnus umbellata*)—Large shrub 10-15 feet. Silver-green foliage. Abundance of red berries. Eye catching against background of conifers.

DOGWOOD (*Cornus*)—Dwarf tree. White, pink or red blooms. Red foliage in fall. Good for nesting.

ELMS (*ulmus*)—Delightful medium-size shade tree. Fast grower.

SNOWBERRY (*Symphoricarpos*)—4-5 foot shrub. Dark green foliage and mountains of large white berries.

RED FLOWERING CRAB (*Malus floribunda*)—A scene stealer. Single carmine buds change to pink and then white. Small blood-red fruit.

VIRGINIA CREEPER (*Parthenocissus quinquefolia*)—Attractive vine with blue-black berries. Leaves turn scarlet in fall. Cover and nesting.

XMAS SNOWBALL (*Dilatatum*)—Snowy white flowers in spring. Clusters of red berries. A good foundation plant.

CHOKEBERRY (*Aronia*)—6-8 foot shrub. Noted for red berries.

AMERICAN BEAUTYBERRY (*Callicarpa purpurea*)—A large-leaf shrub with graceful branches. Covered in August with small pink flowers followed by clusters of purple-violet berries.

RED SNOWBERRY—3-4 foot shrub with small pink flowers in summer followed by red berries.

Trees and Shrubs that Fruit in Summer

BUSH HONEYSUCKLE (*Lonicera*)—Pink or red fragrant, trumpet-shape flowers cover bush in spring. Followed by profusion of red berries. This 5-6 foot shrub also useful for nesting.

ELDERBERRY (*Sambucus*)—Large shrub with fragrant white blooms and clusters of purple-black berries. Also useful for nesting.

BLUEBERRY (*Vaccinium*)—Attractive 5-6 foot shrub with lily of the valley type flowers in early summer followed by mouth-watering berries. Blueberry likes acid soil and good drainage.

MULBERRY (*Morus*)—Medium sized tree with heart shaped leaves. The purple fruit a great favorite of birds. Should be planted where fruit stains will not be a problem.

NANKING BUSH CHERRY (*Prunus tomentosum*)—Large shrub, ideal for shrub or hedge planting. Large crop of small, red cherries.

MAY DAY TREE (*Prunus padus commutata*)—Small tree. First to leaf out in spring. Masses of white blooms in May, followed by small fruit.

JUNEBERRY (*Amelanchier grandiflora*)—Large shrub tree with long white sprays of blooms in early spring followed by red-purple blueberry type fruit.

AMERICAN CRANBERRY—Masses of white flowers in June. Followed by clusters of brilliant red berries. Foliage a beautiful red in fall.

BARBERRY (*Berberis*)—Dwarf growing evergreen with purple berries. Dark green leaves turn bronze in winter. Useful also for cover.

WHAT CAN I DO -- NOW AND IN THE FUTURE -- FOR CONSERVATION?

By LAWANDA P. WATTS
Tappahannock

WINNER OF $800 SCHOLARSHIP IN
LAST YEAR'S WILDLIFE ESSAY CONTEST

AS an individual with a personal responsibility for maintaining America's natural resources, I am obliged to practice conservation *now* in order to make resources available for *future* enjoyment. Conservation—the protection and wise management of natural resources—deserves my immediate concern. Currently, soil, water, forests, and wildlife are being depleted by the demands of population growth and industrial uses faster than they can be replaced. Therefore, the way I manage my priceless heritage of resources is vital not only to my present and future welfare but also to man's existence. Conservation will become dynamic, however, only if I put its principles into practice. I must assume my duty and act now!

As a student, I can awaken to nature's beauty and value through learning to care for the bounteous blessings that surround me. By taking an active part in the conservation projects offered by Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, 4-H, and Future Farmers of America and by reading all available conservation literature, I can discover that the prosperity and welfare of my country have been built on resources and still depend on them. If I develop the proper attitude toward conserving "this priceless heritage loaned to me, I will be

(Continued on next page)

18TH ANNUAL WILDLIFE ESSAY CONTEST

NOW GOING ON!

Approved By
THE VIRGINIA STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

Sponsored By
THE VIRGINIA COMMISSION OF GAME AND INLAND FISHERIES
THE VIRGINIA DIVISION OF THE IZAAK WALTON LEAGUE OF AMERICA

Endorsed By
THE VIRGINIA RESOURCE-USE EDUCATION COUNCIL
THE RESOURCE-USE EDUCATION COMMITTEE OF THE VIRGINIA ACADEMY OF SCIENCE

SEPT. 14, 1964 - JAN. 15, 1965

WHAT CAN I LEARN ABOUT CONSERVATION THROUGH OUTDOOR RECREATION?

CASH PRIZES. ALL VIRGINIA STUDENTS GRADES 5-12 ARE ELIGIBLE. ASK YOUR TEACHER TO ENTER YOUR SCHOOL NOW!

What Can I Do? (Continued from page 21)

able to use, enjoy, and pass it on unspoiled to my children."[1]

As a teacher, I have to arouse students' interest in conservation by enthusiastically introducing projects in the curriculum. In order for tomorrow's leaders to apply the ideals of conservation, I must teach them the basic facts behind conservation and stimulate them to learn more on their own. Actually, I must "learn" and "live" the principles of conservation if I intend to lead the way toward developing a conservation-minded citizenry.

As a farmer, I am compelled to keep my farm land productive since soil is the basic resource on which all others depend. The way I manage my land affects everyone, for I supply food, clothing, shelter, and income. I can stop erosion by using contour plowing, by using cover crops on unprotected land, and by preventing over-grazing. To rebuild eroded soil, I must rotate crops, add the necessary nutrients with fertilizer, and properly use irrigation. To establish scientific methods of farming, I can participate in the Agricultural Conservation Program and act now for the future.

Like soil, water is indispensable to all living things. As manager of a watershed, I can make water suitable for fish again by insisting that polluted water be properly treated before returned to the source from which it was taken. I can advocate the building of dams to prevent flooding and can request farmers to use water carefully for irrigation. In view of the domestic, industrial, agricultural, and recreational water consumption, I must help maintain the water level.

As a forester, I can emphasize the importance of protecting forests from fire, disease, and overcutting. After trees have been cut from an area, I should assist in reforesting that area to prevent soil erosion and to provide homes for wildlife. I can encourage all citizens to prevent careless forest fires and to harvest timber resources in a manner that will provide a continuing supply.

As a sportsman, I am expected to use wisely wildlife resources. I can best protect game and fish by taking care of the places where they live and by providing food. Since wildlife plays an important part in the balance of nature, I must observe all fish and game laws and harvest only the annual surplus. I can inspire other hunters and fishermen to do likewise. Farmers, too, must provide cover for wildlife by not plowing natural grasslands and draining marshes that serve as nesting and feeding areas. To discover the effects on wildlife of toxic chemicals used in agriculture, forestry, and other insect control programs, I can require more extensive research. Wildlife will flourish if I stress the importance of developing natural habitats.

As a citizen, I am the student, the teacher, the farmer, the forester, and the sportsman—a complex conservationist dedicated to promoting the Golden Rule of conservation, providing for posterity. Realizing that natural resources are so interrelated that one cannot be conserved at the expense of the others, I can urge all groups participating in specialized conservation projects to unite their efforts towards the "multiple use concept." As an individual citizen, I am responsible for the role conservation plays in the future destiny of America. Consequently, the most I can do for conservation, now and in the future, is to pledge my allegiance to the conservation movement and daily "live" its principles.

[1] "This Priceless Heritage," (National Wildlife Federation pamphlet), 1963.

Gunmanship (Continued from page 12)

2. When you're carrying a gun over rough country, windfalls, ditches, fences, or handling a gun around home, camp, or car.

3. During a plinking session when everyone is out to have fun and burn ammo, and someone is tempted to "horse around."

4. Late in a hunt when everyone is tired and reflexes are dulled and gun-carrying becomes sloppy.

5. During the hunt when game appears. This burning excitement cannot be duplicated in a hunter safety class or training range. Anticipate this great excitement, and double your caution when it comes.

If a hunting companion ignores safety rules, tell him about it. He may be a close friend, but when he is careless with his gun he is careless with your life. This is a deadly insult. It simply means that he doesn't care enough about you to handle his gun properly, or take the time to learn how. If he doesn't mend his ways, limit your friendship to a safe ball diamond or swimming pool.

As you would never trust an *unloaded* gun, never trust a gun that is *on safe*. A safety catch is only a mechanical device, and devices can fail. It is the least reliable of a gun's safety features—far more important are your own good judgment, skill and the ingrained habits of safe gun-handling. Of course, part of that good judgment dictates proper use of your gun's safety catch. It should be "off" only as you are actually shooting, and should be snapped "on" as you lower the gun from your shoulder. It's a good idea to finger the safety while hunting—to check it constantly with your fingertips to make certain that it is engaged.

The safety catch on some rifles will not engage unless the weapon is cocked or a shell is in the chamber. Some hunters prefer to hunt with shells in the magazine only, leaving their rifles uncocked until they're ready to shoot. And it's not a bad idea. Any target that doesn't give you time to cock a repeating rifle is scarcely a target and likely to result in a ridiculous, if not dangerous, attempt.

When you handle, carry or shoot a gun, do it in a way that keeps you in full control of the muzzle. Keep that business-end pointed in such a way that if the gun goes off, you'll have nothing to regret. The cardinal principle of gun safety is never to point a gun at anything you do not wish to shoot. There are no exceptions to this rule.

At all times, know exactly where your shooting companions are. In the field, be constantly aware of their locations and never relax your vigil over your friends. Guard them against shooting danger; you'll also be guarding yourself.

Never take loaded guns into an automobile, house or camp. There is no good reason to. Sure, we know about burglars, chicken hawks and things that go "bump" in the night. And we repeat: you have no good reason for keeping a loaded gun in camp, car or house.

When a boy is given his first gun (or given the right to earn it), he is paid a great compliment. It means that his father trusts his son's judgment, that he is inviting him to share men's games in a man's world, and that he recognizes his son as having grown beyond boyhood.

Your dad is right. You may not yet be a man, but you're more than a boy. Don't let us old folks down.

Edited by DOROTHY ALLEN

Annual Fishing Rodeo

Approximately 100 boys and girls were guests at the lake of the Winchester Chapter of the Izaak Walton League for the annual fishing rodeo May 10.

As soon as the horn was blown, at 2 P.M., by President Ed Miller to start fishing for the largest and the most fish caught by 3:30 P.M., the excited youthful anglers cast baits of every description into the lake with lots of hope. Salmon eggs and garden hackle (worms) proved to be the enticing baits for the fish. The first fish was caught by Janet Creswell and was a beautiful rainbow that measured 10¾ inches by Game Warden Ramsey's measuring stick. Warden Ramsey was the official judge for size and species of fish caught in the contest.

Though ample fish were in the lake, they refused to cooperate by biting and getting caught. The strong south wind was the biggest factor in keeping the fish from getting caught as it whipped lines, snarled them and prevented lines and baits from being cast into the lake for successful fishing.

The largest fish was a 11¾ inch rainbow caught by Gary Chrisman. Stanley Zuckerman caught seven fish, the most caught.

The youthful anglers catching the largest fish for their age group were: 6 years—Terry Marshall, 7 inch bluegill; 7 years—John L. Boyd, 10½ inch rainbow; 8 years—Kirk Creswell, 11 inch rainbow; 9 years—David Ganse, 9¾ inch rainbow; 10 years—Shelby Ramsey, 11¼ inch rainbow; 11 years—Bill Hinkle, 10¼ inch rainbow; 12 years—Tommy Garber, 8¼ inch rainbow; 13 years—Marshal Boyd, 10½ inch rainbow; 14 years—Judy Boyd, 11½ inch rainbow.

Prizes were donated by local sporting goods stores and consisted of fishing tackle, gift certificates, and cameras for each age group. Free drinks were set up by a local dairy to quench the thirst of the young anglers as they sweated out the time between bites.

Little Ones Count at Fish Rodeo

Around the Fredericksburg Izaak Walton pond it was a typical fisherman's story: "All the big ones got away." But even though the big ones weren't biting, it didn't matter because at the annual fishing rodeo it's the little ones that count.

Competing for an array of prizes, youngster after youngster lined the bank of the pond plopping a variety of fishing gear into the water. Some caught fish; some didn't. But all confessed that it had been fun—right down to the hot dogs, hamburgers and soft drinks that ended the outdoor event.

When the whistle had sounded and the judging was completed these were the results:

Richard White had caught the most fish in the boys' division. Earl Haynes was second. For the girls Paula Wells captured first, followed by Linda Mason.

Fredericksburg *Free Lance Star* photo

In the longest fish category, Billy Fletcher was first, and Dale Brooks second for the boys; Margaret Snellings first and Karen Muse second for the girls.

Prize for the heaviest fish was awarded to Burrous Snellings, and second place went to Larry Tennison. In the girls' division Brenda Braden came in first, and Susan Plum second.

For the smallest fish caught in the event, Dale White's catch measuring three inches took the single prize.

Wildlife Essay Contest Winners

Mr. Robert Whitmore, seventh grade teacher and sponsor of the first entries in the Wildlife Essay Contest at Leesville Road School, admires the framed certificates presented to Guy A. Watson, sixth grade student and winner of a $5 award, and Carolyn Martin, who won the second place award of $25 for all seventh grade students entering the 1963 contest. James Monaghan, Campbell County Game Warden, presented the certificates and checks.

Game Warden Conducts Course For Boy Scouts

Warden Gordon Preston of Rocky Mount instructed a course in soil and water conservation for 12 boy scouts of Troop 30. The course included a trip to a farm where strip cropping and terracing were being practiced, a movie in misuse of soil and water, as well as classroom instruction. In the final session one farm pond was seined and another was stocked with fish. Warden Preston feels the boys now have a much broader knowledge of the importance of soil and water conservation.

Those completing the course were Steve Agee, Ronnie Davis, Marcus Shively, Seward McGhee, John Gartman, Tommy English, Bill Wine, Butch Law, John Wiltshire, Gordon Cox, Freddie Hall and Mark Cannaday.

Gordon Preston, Franklin County Game Warden, (pictured right) presents a merit badge to Freddie Hall, one of 12 scouts of Troop 30 to complete a course in soil and water conservation.

Bird of the Month: Meadowlark

By DR. J. J. MURRAY
Lexington

THE most attractive thing about the meadowlark is its song. Perched on a post, or in the top of a tree, or even on the ground, the bird rings out its sweet, clear whistle. It even gives its song while on the wing. The quality of a bird's song can rarely be reproduced properly in human words, but Roger Tory Peterson's transcription of this song, *tee-yah, tee-yair,* the last note descending, is better than most. It has the freshness of springtime in it. There are variations of this song among different birds and even in the same individual. There is also a chattering *dzeet, dzeet* call in flight.

Though often called the "field lark," the meadowlark is not a lark at all. It is related to the blackbirds and orioles and even to that unpleasant import from Europe, the starling. A size larger than a robin, it has a shorter tail. The bird has an odd way, after alighting or if alarmed, of standing up and flitting out its wings.

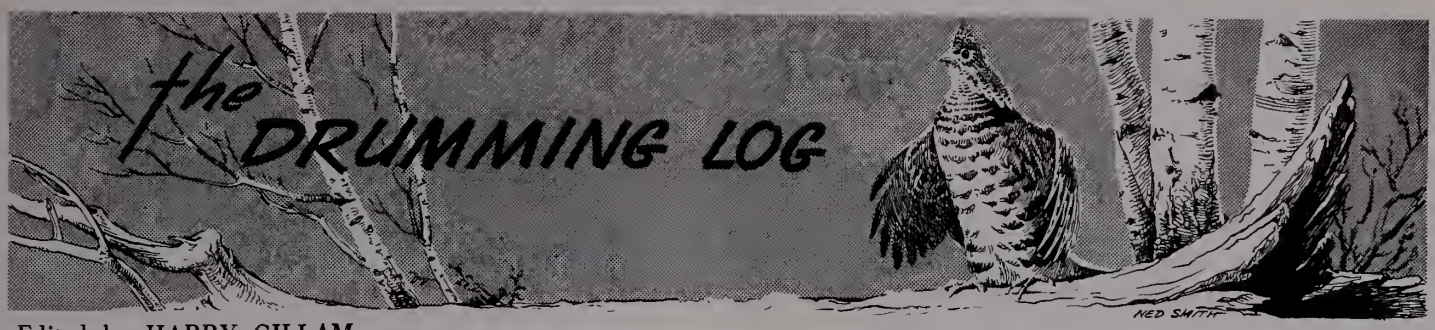
The back is colored a brownish-gray, streaked with black, to match its surroundings. If it did not open its tail in flight to show the outer white feathers, it would scarcely be noticed. The underparts, on the other hand, are bright yellow, with a black crescent across the breast. It flies in an unusual way, alternately beating its wings and sailing.

The nest is a depression in the grass, out in the open. It is lined with fine dead grass and arched over with green grass so that it is very difficult to find unless the bird is flushed. A pair seems to need a territory of about seven acres. Many nests are lost in mowing operations, but since the bird lays four or five eggs and nests twice during the season the numbers keep up well in spite of the losses.

The eggs are basically white but heavily spotted or blotched with brown, reddish, or purple marks. One thing that makes it difficult to locate a nest is that the bird nearly always lights some distance away and creeps through the grass to the nest. Throughout Virginia the eggs are laid from late April to mid-May, with a second nesting later.

The meadowlark is found throughout the year in all parts of our state. Near the coast it is much more common in winter than in summer, while just the reverse is true in the mountains.

In winter these birds gather in flocks. I once counted 75 in a flock around the ruins of old Liberty Hall Academy. They are sometimes crowded in clear places in the snow, especially in fields where cow droppings help to melt the snow and supply food. After a deep snow the birds frequent the edges of roads where the snow first begins to melt. The food habits of the meadowlark are almost entirely beneficial. In summer the food consists almost entirely of insects, particularly of crickets and grasshoppers.



Edited by HARRY GILLAM

Virginia Waltonians Receive National Award

The Virginia Division of the Izaak Walton League of America was awarded the league's Arthur C. Thompson memorial trophy for their state-wide Hunt America Time project at the group's national convention in Davenport, Iowa. Although the H.A.T. program is national in scope, the Virginia Division's handling of the program, which opened more than 50,000 acres of private land for "hunting by permission," was judged the most effective in the nation.

League members canvassed landowners urging them to allow posting of their property with "hunting by permission" signs and pledged respect of participating hunters for lands so posted. Hunters were contacted through sporting goods stores and asked to sign pledge cards committing them to abide by the established rules while hunting on property posted under the program.

Sam Hayden of Fredericksburg, chairman of the Virginia Division's "Hunt Like a Gentlemen" committee, accepted the award on behalf of the state group. In his acceptance speech Hayden emphasized the need for hunter education at all levels, but especially among urban youth. He brought out the point that vandalism and disrespect are the major deterrents to public hunting on private property, as evidenced by the demand for "Safety Zone" signs, the most requested item distributed under the program.

Virginia Waltonians are justly proud to be the recipients of the National Conservation Award. However, we did not win this alone. We must share our award with many people within the Commonwealth. Our game wardens and Game Commission's publications gave added strength to our program. But our greatest thanks go to the farmers and landowners for opening their lands to American sportsmen for hunting, and thus keeping alive an American heritage for coming generations to enjoy. Responsibility rests on the shoulders of all sportsmen to respect the property rights of others, but protecting and providing cover and habitat for the game we seek rests with farmers and landowners. Therefore, I take this opportunity to express my thanks and congratulations to all Virginia farmers, landowners, and sportsmen who "hunt like gentlemen" for strengthening our American heritage and making Virginia a better state in which to enjoy the great out-of-doors happily and safely through "Hunt America Time."

Sam Hayden
Hunt America Time chairman
Virginia Division, IWLA

More and Larger Trophy Fish Reported

J. C. Elder of Lynchburg with the 2 lb. 12 oz. brown trout which holds top spot for that species. It is the first and only brown entered since the Trophy Fish Citation program began in April of 1963.

Entries for freshwater Trophy Fish Citations issued by the Commission of Game and Inland Fisheries have been running well ahead of those received in the first half of 1963, both in quantity and quality, the Commission's information office reports. So far six records set last year have been broken, and records have been established for three new species.

Among the new leaders are a 33 pound 2 ounce carp from Possum Point which bumped last year's 27 pound 7 ounce giant; a 21 pound 1 ounce channel cat from Chickahominy lake which bettered the 17 pound 10 ounce whiskered monarch taken from that lake in 1963; a 4 pound 8 ounce crappie from Buggs Island, the site of last year's top 3 pound 2 ounce catch; a 6 pound 6 ounce pickerel from Lake Burnt Mills which nosed out the 6 pound 4 ouncer taken by C. W. Taylor of Hopewell from that body of water in December of 1963; an 8 pound smallmouth from Claytor Lake which far overshadows last year's 6 pound 10 ounce leader for this species; and a 2 pound 2½ ounce bream which aced out the 2 pounder which held top place in 1963.

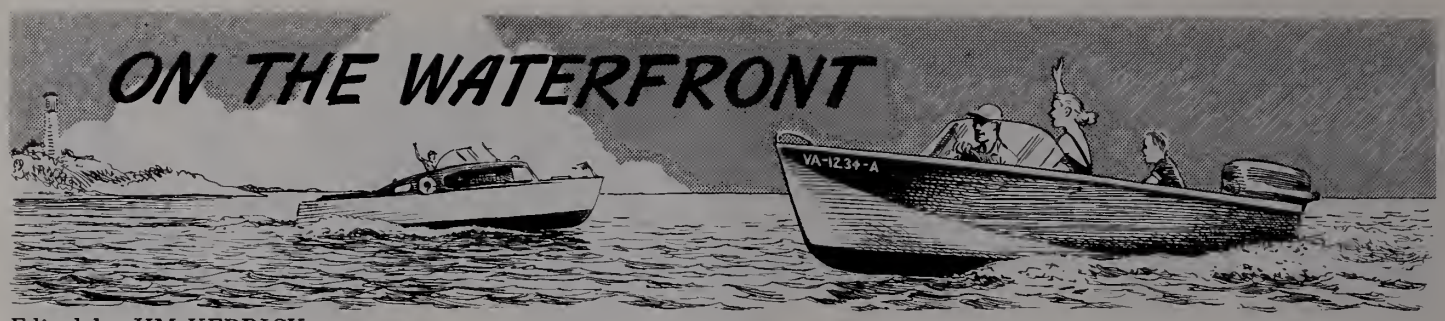
Entries in three of last year's blank categories established a 3 pound 2 ounce brook trout, a 2 pound 12 ounce brown trout and a 2 pound 2 ounce rock bass as current leaders for these species.

State Makes More Pheasants Available to Private Breeders

In order to encourage Virginia shooting preserve operators to release the types of pheasants most suited for survival in the state, the Commission of Game and Inland Fisheries is making young cock birds of preferred species available to Virginia game breeders now. The birds are being offered to breeders at this time for fall releases or birds for breeding next spring.

Species to be available under this expanded program are Iranian blackneck, blackneck-ringneck cross, and Japanese green pheasants. Only limited foundation lots will be available to each applicant. A charge of $1.50 each will be made for 12-week-old cock birds, with correspondingly higher charges for older birds.

Interested breeders may reserve birds or eggs by phone or written request from Dennis Hart, State Game Farm, Cumberland, Virginia.



Edited by JIM KERRICK

Photo courtesy Evinrude Motors
"Where should we land, Son?" Dad asks his lookout and chief trail blazer what looks like the best spot for a landing party. This family is one of hundreds who discovered more boating fun by exploring streams and rivers close to their homes.

Boating Adventurer is Modern-Day Daniel Boone

The frontier spirit of adventure is still part of the American character. If it's new, exciting, and maybe even a little dangerous, we're interested.

Perhaps this explains the growing popularity of the newest form of boating fun—the adventure trip.

The modern-day Daniel Boone usually begins with a short trip close to home. Perhaps it's on the river or stream that he crosses on his way to work each day, or the one that feeds the lake he uses for weekend boating holidays. One day he realizes that he doesn't know where the river leads or what new sights and challenges lay along its banks.

It might take a week or two, but it won't be long before he's plying his way along that unknown river in search of new boating thrills. In case you've thought about this new form of boating fun, the Evinrude News Service offers these tips.

Planning is an important part of success. A quick call to the coast guard auxiliary or local boat club will tell you if the river is passable, what landings are available along the route, and if any parks or beaches grace its shores. Another good source of information is your local marine dealer.

Boating adventures have been especially popular with the youngsters. To keep them interested the smart skipper gives each one a job. This not only makes the children feel like part of the crew, it can prove helpful when navigating new waters. Every young boy enjoys being a look-out. Little sister can be appointed "keeper of the log" to record information about navigation obstacles, weather and a brief description of the adventure. Some even like to add pencil drawings of various landmarks along the way. Many times this information proves valuable on the return trip, or for friends who are planning an adventure trip of their own.

Frequent stops along the way and "landing parties" also add interest for the youngsters. Your look-out can now be a trail blazer, exploring each new site.

Plan a lunch as part of the outing. The food can be prepared at home and carried along. What youngster, and for that matter, what grownup doesn't enjoy an old-fashioned picnic. If you remembered to bring the fishing gear, this is also a good time to see if the fish are biting. In case you catch any good ones make sure it's recorded in the log book.

If your area is rich in local history, it will give your adventure special significance. Perhaps you know about the early settlements in your area—most likely they were located along the river you plan to explore. If you don't, a quick call to the local historical society will supply you with these facts.

One unfailing characteristic of the adventurer is that trips close to home only whet the appetite. Pretty soon the family is selecting areas noted for beautiful scenery, good fishing, or local history. Whatever the goal, the adventurer finds a chance to enjoy all the benefits of boating.

Tips From Reader

CLEANING PROPELLER

Don't try to take weeds, etc., from around the prop while motor is running. To keep from stopping completely I have seen people slow down the motor, lean over and proceed to pull weeds from around the housing. This is a dangerous practice. Stop the motor completely before putting your hands near the prop.

STARTER ROPE

If you have the type which winds around the pulley, you can see the entire length of the cord and replace it when it gets worn. Most cords are now encased and can be examined only by dismantling the starting unit. A weak place in the cord may break when pulled and could account for a bad back injury due to the sudden let-up of tension. Check your starter cord periodically.

L. G. Bakal
Richmond

"Now that I've had my first lesson on how to load a canoe, what's next?"

'63-'64 BIG GAME

TROPHY CONTEST

REGIONAL AND STATEWIDE COMPETITION IN THE FOLLOWING CLASSES:

I Nine points or more	**II** Seven to eight points
III Six points or less	**IV** Bow and Arrow
	V Open Bear Division (Statewide only)

- *Prizes* for regional winners
- *Trophies* for first place State winners in each Division
- plus *Honorable Mention Certificates*

RULES

1. Entries to be judged by a modified version of the Boone & Crockett System
2. Hunters must furnish proof of legal kill—big game check tag or affidavit from game warden
3. Regional competition limited to animals killed in that region during the 1963-64 big game season
4. All entries in state competition to be first entered in regional competition

WESTERN REGIONAL CONTEST

October 29, 30, 31
William G. Myers Armory
Harrisonburg, Virginia

For entry details contact
Kermit Dovell
955 South High Street
Harrisonburg, Virginia
(Phone 434-3272)

Sponsored by the
Harrisonburg-Rockingham
County Izaak Walton League

STATE CONTEST

October 31
William G. Myers Armory
Harrisonburg, Virginia

Sponsored by the
Virginia
Commission of Game and
Inland Fisheries

Only animals first entered in regional competition are eligible

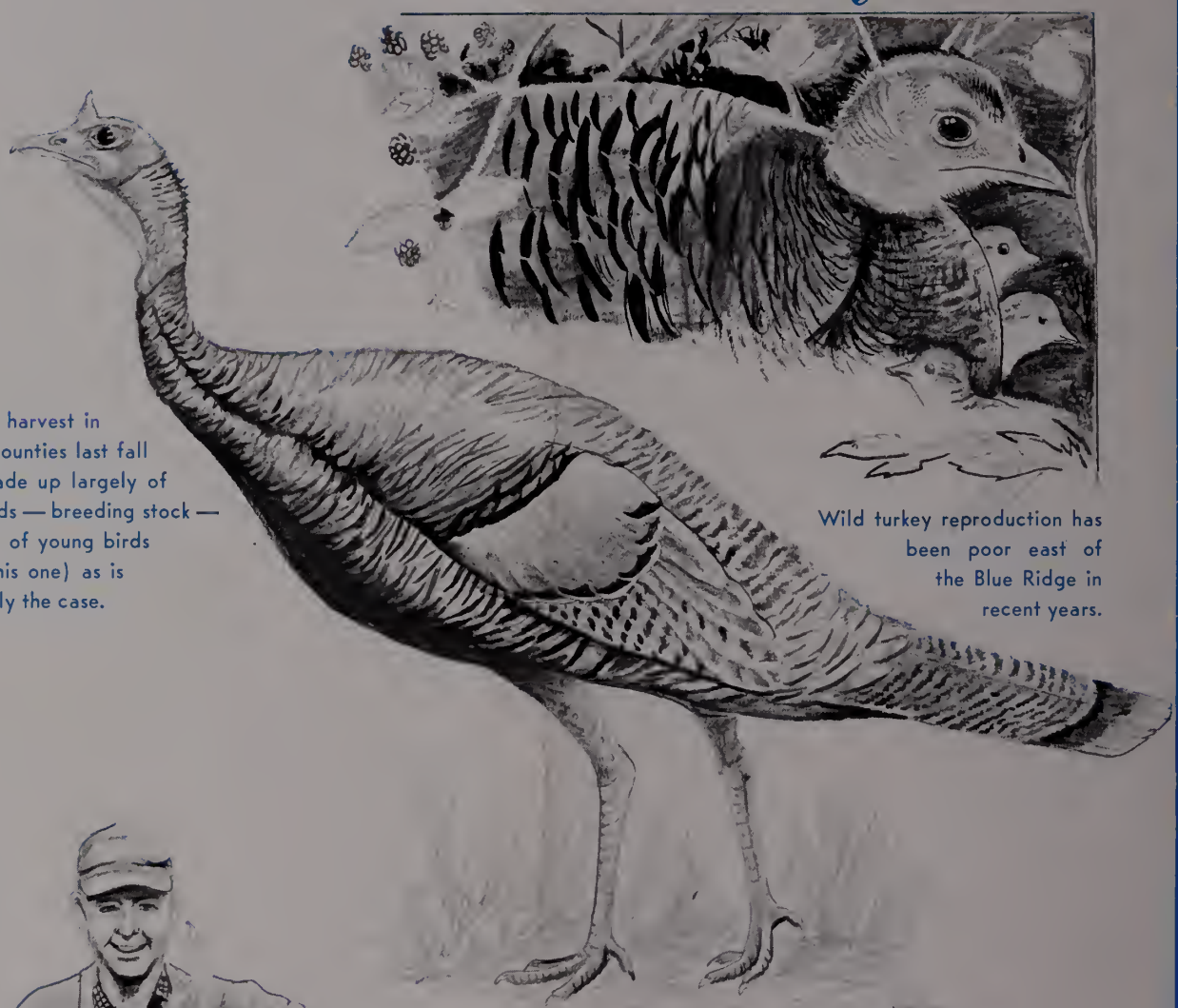
EASTERN REGIONAL CONTEST

October 24
Municipal Armory
2900 Warwick Blvd.
Newport News, Virginia

For entry details contact
E. N. Vandenbree
41 Sinton Road
Newport News, Virginia
(Phone 596-4105)

Sponsored by the
Peninsula Sportsmen's Assn.

SAVE the hen turkey!



Hunter harvest in many counties last fall was made up largely of old birds — breeding stock — instead of young birds (like this one) as is normally the case.

Wild turkey reproduction has been poor east of the Blue Ridge in recent years.

The fall season has been shortened and delayed in order to reduce the fall kill in which hen turkeys predominate.

Save a turkey tab on your license for a gobbler next spring.